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SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

the

SANDMAN™

CONVERGENCE

written by
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illustrated by
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VINCE LOCKE

...AND THEN THE BABY BEAR SAID "SOMEONE'S BEEN SLEEPING IN *MY* BED--AND SHE'S STILL *THERE!*"

AND GOLDILOCKS, WELL, SHE WOKE UP, AND SHE JUMPED OUT OF THE WINDOW, AND DIDN'T STOP RUNNING UNTIL SHE GOT HOME.

AND *THAT* IS THE END OF THE STORY. *THERE.*

DID YOU *LIKE* THAT, DANIEL? *DID* YOU? DID YOU *LIKE* IT?

NOW. YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW?

YOU GOT IT, BABYCAKES. TIME FOR YOUR NAP.

WHERE'S DANIEL'S NUM-NUM, HUH? *HEEERE* IT IS! UH-HUH.

NOW YOU HAVE A LOVELY, LOVELY NAP.

DREAM GOOD DREAMS, AND MOMMA WILL COME AND GET YOU WHEN YOU WAKE UP. OKAY, BABY?

COME ON. BE IN.

IF I DON'T TALK TO AN ADULT SOON I'M GOING TO START CLIMBING THE *WALL.*

HI CARLA. S'ME. LYTA.

DANIEL? HE'S FINE. I JUST PUT HIM DOWN FOR HIS NAP.

ME?

I'M GOING STIR CRAZY, AND I'VE JOINED THE RANKS OF THE WALKING BRAIN-DEAD, BUT OTHERWISE I'M JUST *PEACHY.*

NO, I'VE GONE OUT A COUPLE OF TIMES IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS.

LAST WEEK I WENT OUT TO DINNER WITH MY LAWYER AND HIS WIFE. YOU REMEMBER BILL AND TRISH? YEAH, THAT'S THEM. SO YOU KNOW WHAT I *DID*? WELL, BILL ORDERS A STEAK.

SO WHEN THE WAITER BRINGS THE FOOD TO THE TABLE, I PULL HIS PLATE OVER AND START CUTTING HIS STEAK UP REALLY SMALL.

WELL, THEY WERE PRETTY *NICE* ABOUT IT, BUT *SHEESH...*

AND, LIKE, A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO I GOT LUCY DOWNSTAIRS TO BABYSIT FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS. SO I HEAD DOWN TO THAT NEAT CLOTHES STORE ON MELROSE, WHAT'S IT CALLED?

YEAH, THERE.

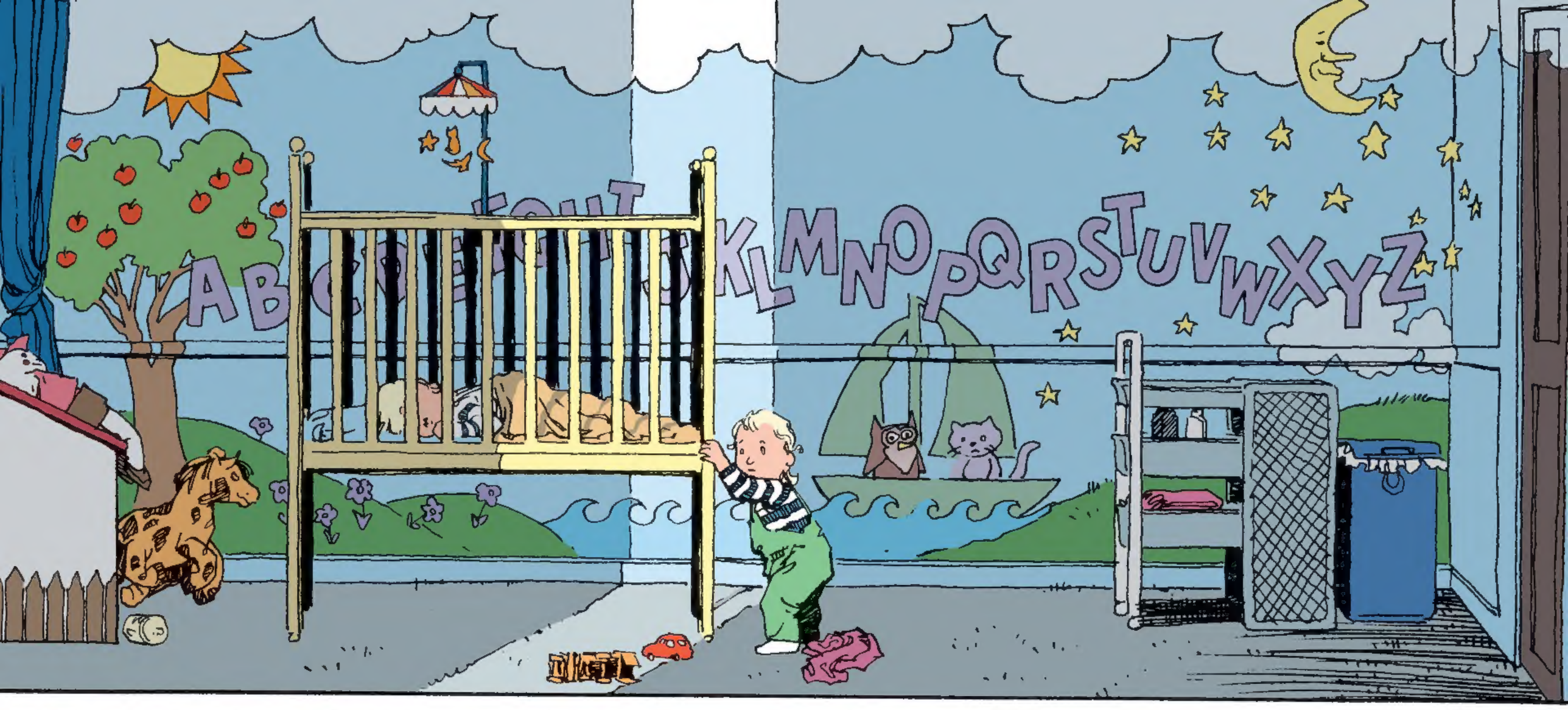
ANYWAY, I HEAR A SIREN, SO I TURN AROUND AND YELL "*LOOK! FIRE TRUCK!*" I MEAN, I'M THERE ON MY OWN. AND THE WHOLE STORE'S *STARING* AT ME, LIKE WHO *IS* THIS NUT? I FELT SUCH A TOTAL *DWEEB.*

NO. I THINK I KIND OF PREFERRED IT BEFORE HE WAS WALKING.

I MEAN, OKAY, WELL, THE *VCR* STOPPED WORKING, I GET A GUY OVER, HE TAKES IT APART, YOU KNOW WHAT HE FINDS *IN* IT? HALF A CARROT.

DANIEL JUST GETS *EVERYWHERE...*

IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE HE FIGURES OUT HOW TO GET OUT OF HIS CRIB.


ABC
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OOWURK?

Dog-gee.

HI, KID.

YOU COME FOR A SECRET, TOO? WHAT'S YOUR NAME? HUH?

Bir-dee.

BIRDIE? WEIRD NAME. OH. YOU MEAN ME. YEAH. I'M MATTHEW.

A RAVEN. ATCHA SERVICE.

HI, GREGORY. HOW THEY HANGING?

UWURRRK.

YEAH? YOU SHOULD TRY BEING A BIRD SOME TIME.

GRUURRNK.

RIGHT.

MATTHEW? WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?

UP THE STEPS, KIDDO. C'MON. ONE AT A TIME.

HUH? EVE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING AWAY FROM THE CAVE?

HM? IS THERE ANY RULE THAT SAYS I ALWAYS HAVE TO DWELL IN NIGHTMARES?

I DON'T KNOW. I MEAN, YOU ALWAYS *HAVE*. AS LONG AS WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER. AND *RULES?* HEY, THIS PLACE IS FULL OF MORE RULES THAN YOU COULD SHAKE A *STICK* AT.

SOMETIMES I THINK HE MAKES THEM UP AS HE GOES ALONG.

NO. HE MADE THEM A *VERY* LONGTIME AGO. IT'S PART OF HIS NATURE. MAKING RULES.

UP YOU COME, CHILD.

WHAT *IS* HE? I THOUGHT HE WAS A DREAM, AT FIRST. BUT HE DOESN'T TALK.

NO, HE'S A HUMAN CHILD.

THE PARLIAMENT OF ROOKS

WRITTEN BY NEIL GAIMAN
PENCILLED BY JILL THOMPSON
INKED BY VINCE LOCKE
COLORED BY DANIEL VOZZO
LETTERED BY TODD KLEIN
EDITED BY KAREN BERGER
ASSISTED DUTIFULLY BY
ALISA KWITNEY

YEAH? SO WHAT'S *HIS* STORY?

HIS, UH, HIS UH, HM, HIS NAME IS DANIEL.

WUHWON'T YOU ALL UH CUHCOME IN? THIS UH, IS INDEED AN UM. HM. HONOR.

THE SANDMAN

FEATURING CHARACTERS CREATED BY GAIMAN, DRINGENBERG & KIETH.

WERWOULD UM ANYBODY CUHCARE FOR, UH, REFRESHMENTS?

THAT WOULD BE VERY NICE. THANK YOU. TEA, PLEASE. WITH LEMON.

I DON'T DRINK TEA. BUT I'LL TAKE A SAUCER OF WATER. AND IF YOU GOT ANYTHING FOR ME TO EAT, HEY, I WOULDN'T SAY NO.

THERE, UH, MUH-*MAY* BE A DEAD RAT OR TWO, HM, LEFT DOWNSTAIRS.

WE, UH, WELL, UH, HM, WE'VE GUHGOT SOMETHING *NASTY* IN THE BASEMENT, BUT HE UH MM ALWAYS KERKER*KILLS* MORE THAN HE CAN EAT. EYES TOO BUHBIG FOR HIS, UM, UH... WHATEVER...

YEAH, A RAT WOULD BE *GREAT*. WITH THE EYES IN FOR PREFERENCE...

I'LL UH SUHSEE WHAT WE CAN HM DO.

Meep?

Dog-gie?

HIS NAME'S *GOLDIE*, DANIEL. HE'S A BABY GARGOYLE.

Gow-die.

IT'S WEIRD, BEING A RAVEN.

I MEAN, YOU REALLY **ARE** A RAVEN, WHEN YOU'RE A RAVEN. WHEN HE GAVE ME THE OPTION OF STAYING WITH YOU AS A BIG BLACK BIRD OR MOVING ON, I SUPPOSE I FIGURED I'D BE A MAN IN A RAVEN'S BODY.

NOPE. IT DON'T WORK LIKE THAT. I'M A RAVEN. ONE-A THE CORVIDAE FAMILY.

HELL, I SUPPOSE IT COULD BE **WORSE.** I COULD HAVE BEEN A CROW. I MEAN, THEY'RE DUMB AS SHIT, AND THEY LIE A LOT.

YOU CAN CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDS, MY LOVE. YOU CAN'T CHOOSE YOUR FAMILY.

JACKDAWS ARE OKAY, THOUGH.

AND ROOKS ARE JUST **WEIRD.**

MAGPIES ARE COOL. I MEAN, THEY'VE GOT THEIR OWN COUNTING RHYME. YOU EVER HEAR IT? ONE FOR SORROW, TWO FOR JOY--

THREE FOR A GIRL, FOUR FOR A BOY...

FIVE FOR SILVER. SIX FOR GOLD...

AND SUHSEVEN FOR A SECRET, NEVER TO BE TUHTOLD. IT'S HM QUITE TRUE, YOU KNOW.

HUHU**HERE** YOU ARE. A RUHRAT. IT'S A BIT RUHROTTEN, I'M AFRAID.

NO PROBLEM. THEY TASTE **BETTER** THAT WAY. GIVES THEM SOME FLAVOR.

THANK YOU, ABEL.

SQUERRONK.

HEY, ABEL, TERRIFIC RAT.

HM. UH. SO, MATTHEW. ERUH HOW'S LORD MUHMORPHEUS?

I'M NOT SURE. I MEAN, THEY'VE BEEN PRETTY INSEPARABLE FOR THE LAST FEW WEEKS. I'VE HARDLY *SEEN* HIM. EITHER THEY'RE IN HIS QUARTERS, OR GOING FOR LONG WALKS, HAND IN HAND.

OH DEAR.

SHE'S NOT REALLY HIS *TYPE*, IS SHE?

HOW DO YOU MEAN?

I DIDN'T THINK HE *HAD* A TYPE.

WHY, *BLESS* MY BOOTS AND CHIN-WHISKERS. DO MY EYES DE*CEIVE* ME? COULD IT *BE*?

IS MY BELOVED BROTHER ACTUALLY HAVING A *PARTY* WITH*OUT* ME? OH BE *STILL*, MY TREMBLING HEART.

CUHCUHCUHCAIN? NUHNUHNUHNO NUHNOTATALL. WUHWE WERE JUH-JUST SUHSAYING HOW NUH*NICE* IT WOULD BUHBE IF YUHYOU WERE HERE...

YOU'RE NOT EVEN A *GOOD* LIAR, BARREL-BELLY. WHO'S THE BRATLING?

HIS NAME'S DANIEL, CAIN. A HUMAN CHILD. OFF-LIMITS. HE'S WITH ME.

A HUMAN CHILD? REALLY? WELL, WELL, *WELL*...

THREE OLD STORY-TELLERS HAVE FOUND THEM-SELVES AN AUDIENCE. WILL WONDERS NEVER CEASE?

SO, HERE WE ARE, ALL THREE OF US. *JUST* LIKE THE OLD DAYS. AND WE'VE EVEN GOT AN AUDIENCE. LET'S TELL STORIES.

I'VE *STOPPED* TELLING STORIES.

NO ONE STOPS TELLING STORIES. IT'S IN THE ***BLOOD***. STORYTELLERS WHO DON'T TELL STORIES AREN'T ANYTHING. THEY'RE NOTHING AT ALL.

NUHNO TROUBLE. PLEASE, CAIN. NUHNO TROUBLE.

LAY OFF, CAIN. ANYWAY. I CAME HERE FOR A SECRET.

OHH YOU ***DID***, DID YOU, BIRDIE? BUT CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET? ARE YOU SURE YOU WOULDN'T PREFER A MYSTERY?

I'VE GOT A MYSTERY THAT'LL RAISE THE FEATHERS ON THE BACK OF YOUR LITTLE OH-SO-TWISTABLE NECK.

YOU PISS ME OFF, CAIN. AND YOU SOUND *JUST* LIKE VINCENT PRICE.

THAT BARGAIN BASEMENT VAUDEVILLIAN? HE SOUNDS NOTHING ***LIKE*** ME.

OHH, YOU WOUND ME DEEPLY, MATTHEW. AND YOU STINK OF ROTTEN RAT.

YEAH, AND ***YOU*** STINK OF OLD HAM. OKAY. OKAY. A MYSTERY. BUT IT'D BETTER BE ***GOOD***.

YOU MENTIONED ROOKS, EARLIER. WELL, LET ME GIVE YOU A ***MYSTERY*** OF ROOKS...

"ROOK: CORVUS FRUGILEGUS. ALSO A WORD MEANING TO CHEAT OR STEAL. ALSO A PIECE IN CHESS.

"ROOKS ARE THE MOST SOCIAL OF THE CORVIDAE. THEY BUILD NESTS IN ROOKERIES (AN OBSOLETE NAME, INCIDENTALLY, FOR A GHETTO OF THIEVES AND WHORES), MANY HUNDREDS OF BIRDS TO A TREE."

"THEY HAVE ENOUGH OF A LANGUAGE THAT EVEN HUMANS CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR DANGER CALLS AND THEIR ALL-CLEAR CALLS. THEY CAN IMITATE HUMAN SPEECH.

"BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE: THE MYSTERY.

"IT'S A MYSTERY FROM WHICH WE DERIVE THE COLLECTIVE NOUN WE USE FOR THESE BIRDS. LIKE A MURDER OF CROWS, A TIDING OF MAGPIES, AN UNKINDNESS OF RAVENS...

"A PARLIAMENT OF ROOKS.

"YOU'LL GET A FIELD. EMPTY. SUDDENLY THE SKY IS BLACK WITH BIRDS. AND THEY FALL LIKE A RAGGED BLACK RAIN ONTO A FIELD, COVERING IT COMPLETELY. OR ALMOST COMPLETELY.

"IN THE *CENTER* OF THE FIELD, THERE'S AN EMPTY SPACE. AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THAT SPACE SITS ONE LONE ROOK.

"IT CAWS, AND CALLS, AND CAWS SOME MORE.

"TEN THOUSAND LITTLE EYES STARE AT IT, UNFLINCHING. *SOMETIMES* THEY CALL OUT, AS IF THEY'RE ASKING QUESTIONS. IT'S LIKE A PARLIAMENT. IT'S LIKE A *TRIAL*.

"THE LONE ROOK CONTINUES TO CAW. AND THE OTHERS WAIT."

THIS CAN GO ON FOR *HOURS*. FROM DAWN TILL NEAR DUSK.

YEAH? THEN WHAT HAPPENS?

ONE OF TWO THINGS...

"ON SOME SIGNAL-- WHICH HUMAN OBSERVERS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO IDENTIFY-- EITHER THE BIRDS TAKE WING AS ONE, LEAVING THE LONE ROOK ALONE IN THE FIELD...

"...OR, AGAIN AS ONE, THEY FALL ON THE BIRD, AND PECK IT TO DEATH.

"THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS."

WHY?

IT'S A MYSTERY, ISN'T IT?

NOW, THAT'S SOMETHING I'VE NEVER DONE. EH, BROTHER GULLY-GUTS? PECKED YOU TO DEATH.

THERE. THAT WAS MINE. NOW, WHO'S NEXT? YOU, MEAT BOY?

NUHNUMN-NUHNUHNUH-BUHBUHCUH-CUH...

NO, HE'S USELESS FOR NOW. IT'LL HAVE TO BE YOU, MOTHER.

I'M NOT YOUR MOTHER, CAIN.

YOU'RE EVERYBODY'S MOTHER.

THAT'S A MATTER OF OPINION.

BUT I DON'T TELL STORIES. NOT ANY MORE.

NOT EVEN TO LITTLE *CHILDREN*? LITTLE *HUMAN* CHILDREN? A LITTLE SON OF *ADAM*?

I DON'T HAVE ANY STORIES.

EVERYBODY HAS *ONE* STORY.

YES. YES, THEY DO...

OKAY. ADAM HAD THREE WIVES.

HUH? THREE?

SURE. IT'S *NOT* A STORY THEY TELL MUCH ANY MORE, MATTHEW. IT'S AN *OLD* STORY...

"AND GOD DIVIDED ADAM INTO TWO BEINGS. ONE MALE, ONE FEMALE.

"ADAM AND LILITH."

"IT BEGINS WITH ADAM. THEY SAY HE WAS HERMAPHRODITE, AN ANDROGYNE GIANT, BACK IN THE BEGINNING, IN THE DAWN.

"'MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM, AND HE CALLED THEIR NAME ADAM.'

"FOUR ARMS, FOUR LEGS, TWO HEADS, TWO SETS OF SEXUAL ORGANS, TWO BODIES JOINED BACK TO BACK."

LILITH WAS ADAM'S *FIRST* WIFE.

"SHE WAS POWERFUL AND INTELLIGENT. SHE WAS, AFTER ALL, *HIM*--A ***FEMALE*** HIM. DURING SEX, SHE INSISTED ON CLIMBING ON TOP. A POSITION OF EQUALITY. SUPERIORITY, PERHAPS.

"THAT WAS, PERHAPS, THE FINAL STRAW."

"LILITH WAS EXPELLED FROM EDEN. AND SHE PLANTED HER ***OWN*** GARDEN. THEY SAY SHE COPULATED WITH DEMONS, OR WITH THE SONS OF GOD. SHE HAD MANY CHILDREN.

"ADAM WAS LEFT ALONE."

IT WAS THEN THAT GOD CREATED THE SECOND WIFE.

YEAH? WHAT WAS *HER* NAME?

OH. SHE NEVER *HAD* A NAME, POOR THING.

"GOD CREATED HER FOR ADAM, OUT OF NOTHINGNESS."

"BONES FIRST."

"THEN INTERNAL ORGANS."

"THEN FLESH.

"MUSCLE.

"SINEW."

"FAT.

"BILE.

"EYES.

"SNOT."

"SKIN.

"HAIR.

"BREATH..."

"ADAM COULDN'T BEAR TO GO **NEAR** HER. HE WOULDN'T TOUCH HER.

"'HE SAW HER FULL OF SECRETIONS AND BLOOD.' THAT'S WHAT THE MIDRASH STATES.'"

"BODIES ARE **STRANGE**. SOME PEOPLE HAVE REAL PROBLEMS WITH THE STUFF THAT GOES ON INSIDE THEM.

"YOU FIND OUT THAT INSIDE SOMEONE YOU **KNOW** THERE'S JUST MUCUS AND MEAT AND SLIME AND BONE.

"THEY MENSTRUATE, SALIVATE, DEFECATE AND CRY. YOU **KNOW**? SOMETIMES IT CAN JUST **KILL** THE ROMANCE.

"YOU KNOW THAT?"

JESUS. SO WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?

OPINIONS DIFFER. MOST SAY GOD DESTROYED HER. A FEW HAVE CLAIMED THAT SHE WAS PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE GARDEN. ALONE.

"THEN IT WAS THAT GOD PUT ADAM TO SLEEP, TOOK A RIB FROM HIS SIDE, AND FROM IT CREATED EVE."

ONLY WHEN SHE WAS COMPLETE DID ADAM WAKE. HE SAW EVE, FINISHED AND PERFECT, AND TOOK HER TO WIFE.

AND THEY ATE OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL; AND, KNOWING GOOD FROM EVIL, THEY WERE NO LONGER IN PARADISE.

"IN GENESIS IT STATES THAT GOD EXPELLED THEM BECAUSE HE WAS ***SCARED***: SCARED THAT, HAVING DISOBEYED HIM ONCE, THEY'D DISOBEY HIM AGAIN-- THEY'D EAT OF THE TREE OF LIFE, AND LIVE FOREVER, LIKE GODS. ENDLESS..."

ADAM AND EVE LIVED TOGETHER UNTIL DEATH PARTED THEM.

SOME THERE ARE THAT SAY THIS IS ***TRUE*** HISTORY, AND THAT THERE REALLY ***WAS*** AN EARTHLY PARADISE. OTHERS CLAIM THE TALE IS MERELY A METAPHOR FOR THE RISE OF CON - SCIOUSNESS; THE BITTERSWEET FRUIT OF WISDOM.

"BUT ***THIS*** IS TRUE: ADAM HAD THREE WIVES.

"AND LILITH GAVE BIRTH TO THE LILIM, THE CHILDREN OF LILITH, WHO HAVE HAUNTED THE NIGHTS OF THE SONS OF ADAM EVER SINCE. MOTHER TO SO MANY, THEN AND NOW...

"AND THE NAMELESS ONE, THE VIRGIN, WAS MADE OF FLESH AND OF BLOOD, FORGOTTEN, PERHAPS COLDLY DESTROYED, AND UNMENTIONED SAVE IN THE DUSTIEST OF BOOKS.

"AND EVE LIVED TO BE OLDER THAN ANY WOMAN; WHO, IN THE END, DID NOT DIE, BUT WHO RETREATED TO HER CAVE. BLAMED FOR SIN. FOR MISERY. FOR THE ***FALL***."

BUT SOME SAY ADAM MARRIED ONLY ONCE. AND THEY SPEAK TRULY TOO.

THAT IS MY STORY FOR YOU, CHILD. REMEMBER IT.

WASN'T THAT NICE?

A LITTLE PIECE OF FAMILY HISTORY. LIKE FLIPPING THROUGH THE PAGES OF THE FAMILY ALBUM. MAKES ME GO ALL SOFT AND GOOEY INSIDE.

JUST LIKE YOU, EH, LACK-WIT?

IF I HAD A SHARP ROCK ON ME, I COULD SHOW THESE NICE PEOPLE JUST HOW SOFT AND GOOEY YOU ARE INSIDE. HEHEHEH...

ANYWAY. NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN. I HAVEN'T THROWN YOU OFF, HAVE I?

MUH-MY TURN?

YES INDEEDY.

I-- I'M NUNOT HM, VERY GOOD WITH UH CHILDREN.

NO?

WHY DON'T YOU TELL HIM THE STORY ABOUT THE LILY THAT WANTED TO BE AN EYE? OR THE WOLF-BOY AND HIS LADY-LOVE, AND HOW THEY MADE LOVE BENEATH THE MOON?

I...

COME ON, BLUBBERBALL. THIS IS THE HOUSE OF SECRETS, ISN'T IT?

CHUMPF

SO TELL HIM A SECRET.

GO ON. TELL HIM OF THE DOORS IN THE MIST, AND HOW TO OPEN THEM. OR THE TRUE TITLE OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE BLACK AND WHITE EAGLE.

TELL HIM ABOUT THE GIRL WHO COULD DRINK ONLY TEARS, AND HOW SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH A WOMAN WHO HAD NEVER LEARNED TO CRY.

THOSE AREN'T CHUCHILDREN'S STORIES, CAIN.

NO?

WELL, THEN. *TELL* HIM A CHILDREN'S STORY.

UH. OKAY. A LONG TIME AGO, LONG BEFORE THE WORLD YOU KNOW WAS A SPECK IN SPACE, WHEN EVERYTHING WAS YOUNG, DEATH AND DREAM WENT WALKING...

ALL RIGHT. I WILL.

"DEATH WAS A LITTLE OLDER THAN DREAM. THINGS HAD THE POTENTIAL TO DIE BEFORE THEY HAD THE POTENTIAL TO DREAM. BUT THERE HADN'T BEEN MUCH DREAMING OR MUCH DYING BACK THEN.

"THINGS WERE STILL TAKING SHAPE."

"THEY WERE... *THEY* WERE CHILDREN, BACK THEN. IN THE OLDEN DAYS."

CHILDREN?

THEY DIDN'T EVEN LOOK *REMOTELY* HUMAN. *NONE* OF US DID, BACK THEN. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO *FEED* THE CHILD --SANITIZED PABLUM? LI'L DEATH? LI'L MORPHEUS? *REVOLTING!*

THIS IS *MUHMY* STORY, CAIN. LUHLEAVE *ME ALONE.*

"A-AND ON THEIR WALK THEY SAW TWO BROTHERS. TWO BOYS. THEIR NAMES WERE, HM, CAIN AND ABEL. THE BROTHERS WERE *FIGHTING*.

"ABEL, THE YOUNGER BROTHER, HAD LOTS OF SHEEP, AND HAD GIVEN THE LAND'S CREATOR A SHEEP AS A PRESENT.

"CAIN, WHO WAS OLDER, GREW FRUIT AND VEGETABLES, AND *HE'D* GIVEN THE LAND'S CREATOR SOME OF *THEM*."

BUT THE CREATOR LIKED THE *SHEEP* BEST, BECAUSE IT WAS ALL FUNNY AND FLUFFY AND WHITE--

BECAUSE IT WAS WARM STEAMING *MEAT*. IT WAS A BLEEDING *SACRIFICE*, YOU BLOODY IDIOT! YOU CAN'T EVEN GET YOUR *OWN* STORY RIGHT!

THIS IS *MY* STORY. I TELL IT *MY* WAY.

"SO THE BIGGER BROTHER GOT UPSET, AND THEY STARTED TO FIGHT.

"WHEN THEY'D FINISHED FIGHTING, THE LITTLE GIRL WENT OVER TO THEM. SHE TOOK LITTLE ABEL BY THE HAND. 'YOU'RE COMING WITH ME,' SHE SAID. 'YOU'RE COMING TO PLAY IN *MY* GARDEN, NOW.'

"BUT HER BROTHER STOPPED HER."

I'm building a garden, too. Why don't you come with me?

WHAT WOULD I DO THERE?

I'd give you a little house, and a job. You'd get to tell stories.

WHAT *KIND* OF STORIES?

"AND THEN DREAM SMILED. 'SECRET STORIES,' HE SAID.

"'I THINK I'D LIKE THAT,' SAID ABEL."

"ABEL GOT A LOVELY HOUSE, AND A LETTER OF COMMISSION. BUT HE WAS LONELY.

"SO ABEL WENT UP TO DREAM'S BIG HOUSE.

"'WHAT'S THE MATTER?' ASKED DREAM.

I'M LONELY.

Would you like a friend?

YES, PLEASE.

Then go home. There's a nice surprise waiting for you.

"ABEL WENT HOME. AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE FOUND? NEXT TO HIS HOUSE WAS ***ANOTHER*** LITTLE HOUSE. AND SITTING IN THE GARDEN WAS HIS BROTHER, CAIN.

"'I'M GOING TO STAY HERE FOREVER, TOO,' SAID CAIN. 'LOOK! I'VE GOT A LETTER OF COMMISSION AS WELL!'

"'***HURRAH!***' SAID ABEL, AND THE TWO BROTHERS HUGGED EACH OTHER JOYFULLY."

AND THEY LIVED NEXT DOOR FROM THAT DAY TO THIS...

...HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

THAT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY THE MOST MERETRICIOUS GARBAGE I'VE EVER HEARD.

HEY, ABEL. YOU KNOW SOMETHING? WHEN YOU TELL STORIES, YOU DON'T STUTTER?

RUHRUHRUH- RUHREALLY? I UH I UH HUHHADN'T NOTICED.

WELL, I LIKED YOUR STORY. I THOUGHT IT WAS SWEET. AND I'M SURE DANIEL LIKED IT TOO. THANK YOU, ABEL.

LOOK, CAN I ASK A DUMB QUESTION? ALL THIS BIBLICAL STUFF. I MEAN, HOW TRUE IS IT? ARE YOU GUYS THE REAL CAIN AND ABEL? ARE YOU THE REAL EVE?

AND I MEAN, Y'KNOW, HOW DOES IT ALL TIE IN WITH CAVEMEN AND DINOSAURS AND ALL THAT SHIT?

OH, THIS WHUWASN'T ON EARTH, THUH THU--

SHUT UP!

WHAT'S THE POINT IN HAVING SECRETS AND MYSTERIES IF YOU'RE GOING TO BLAB THEM TO EVERY TOM-TIT, DICKY-BIRD AND -- AND HARRIER?

NEXT THING, YOU'LL BE TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT PARLIAMENTS OF ROOKS.

YOU MEAN YOU KNOW?

OF COURSE HE KNOWS. BUT HE WON'T TELL YOU.

I CUHCOULD IF I WHUWANTED TO.

BUT YOU WON'T.

GO AWAY. ALL OF YOU. FUN'S OVER. GO ON, GET OUT.

BUH-BUT WE WERE ALL HAVING SUCH A NUHNICE TIME...

OUT.

Meep?

Dog-gee.

GOODBYE, HM, DANIEL. COME BACK, HRR, WHUWHENEVER YOU WANT TO. I, UH, I THINK GOLDIE LIKES YOU.

WELL, THAT WAS... INTERESTING. WASN'T IT?

HEY? EE-EVE? HELLO? ANYONE HOME?

I'M SORRY, MATTHEW. I WAS MILES AWAY.

YEAH? PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS...

MM? I WAS THINKING ABOUT ROOKS. ONE ON EACH CORNER OF THE BOARD. TWO TO A PLAYER...

FOUR FOR A BOY...

MUH-MATTHEW!

YEAH? WHAT?

UH. IT'S NOT A PUHPARLIAMENT. OR A TRIAL.

THE UH ROOK IN THE MUHMIDDLE OF THE FIELD IS A STORY-TELLER. IT'S TELLING THE REST OF THEM AN UM STORY.

AND WHUWHEN IT FINISHES... IT FINDS OUT WHETHER OR NOT THEY, UH, LIKED THE STORY IT TOLD.

AAII!

YOU *TOLD* HIM! I *TOLD* YOU NOT TO *TELL* HIM AND YOU *TOLD* HIM!

IT WAS *MY* MYSTERY AND YOU GAVE IT *AWAY!*

BUHBUT *CAIN*, IT'S NOT ONE OF THE *BIG* SECRETS. IT'S NOT IMPORTANT.

THAT'S NOT THE POINT!

I KEEP *TELLING* YOU: IT'S THE *MYSTERY* THAT ENDURES. *NOT* THE EXPLANATION.

A GOOD MYSTERY CAN LAST FOR *EVER*.

THE MYSTERIOUS CORPSE HAS A MAGIC ALL ITS OWN.

NOBODY REALLY *CARES* WHO-DONE-IT. THEY'LL PECK YOU TO PIECES IF YOU TELL THEM, LITTLE BROTHER...

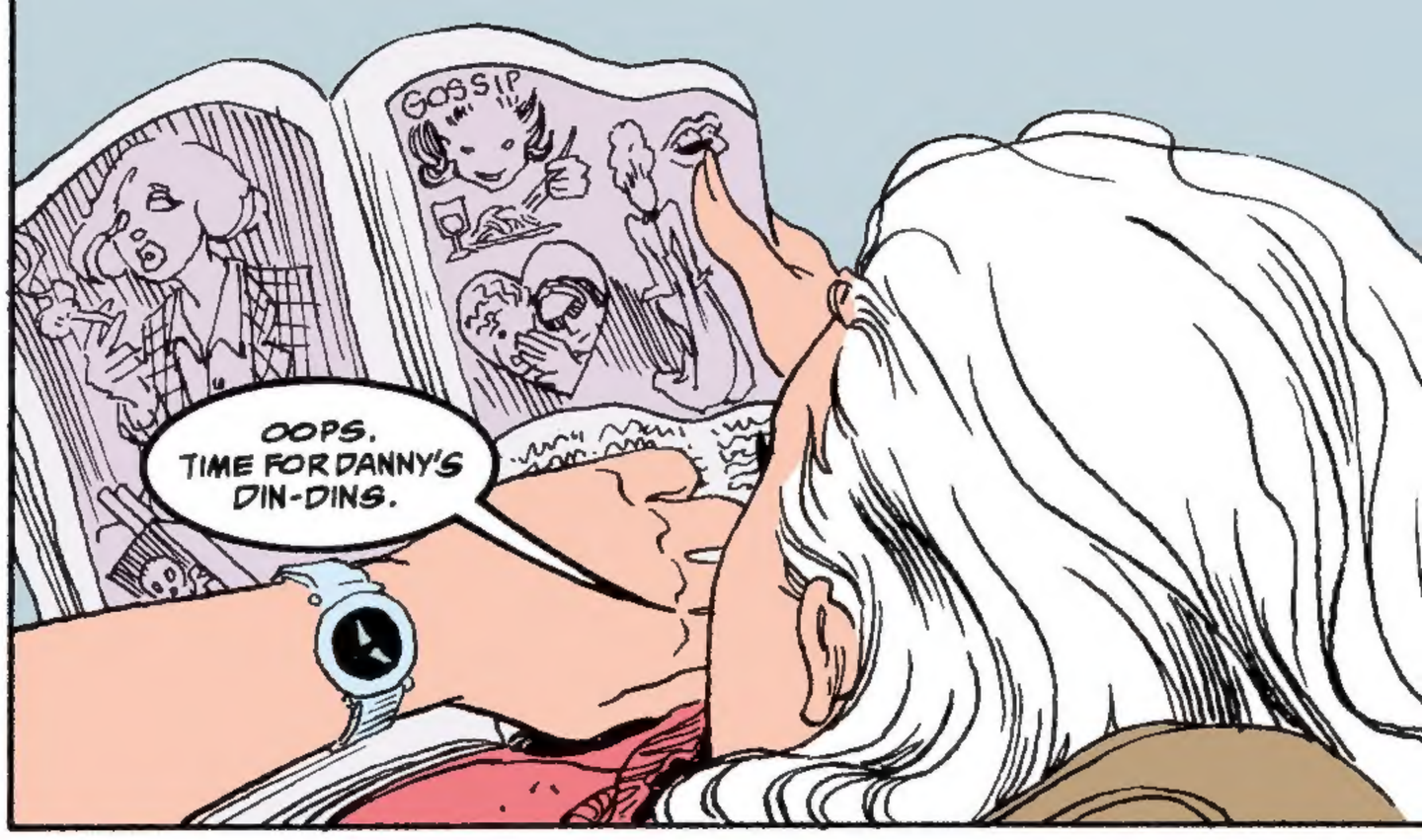
IT'S FOR YOUR *OWN* GOOD...

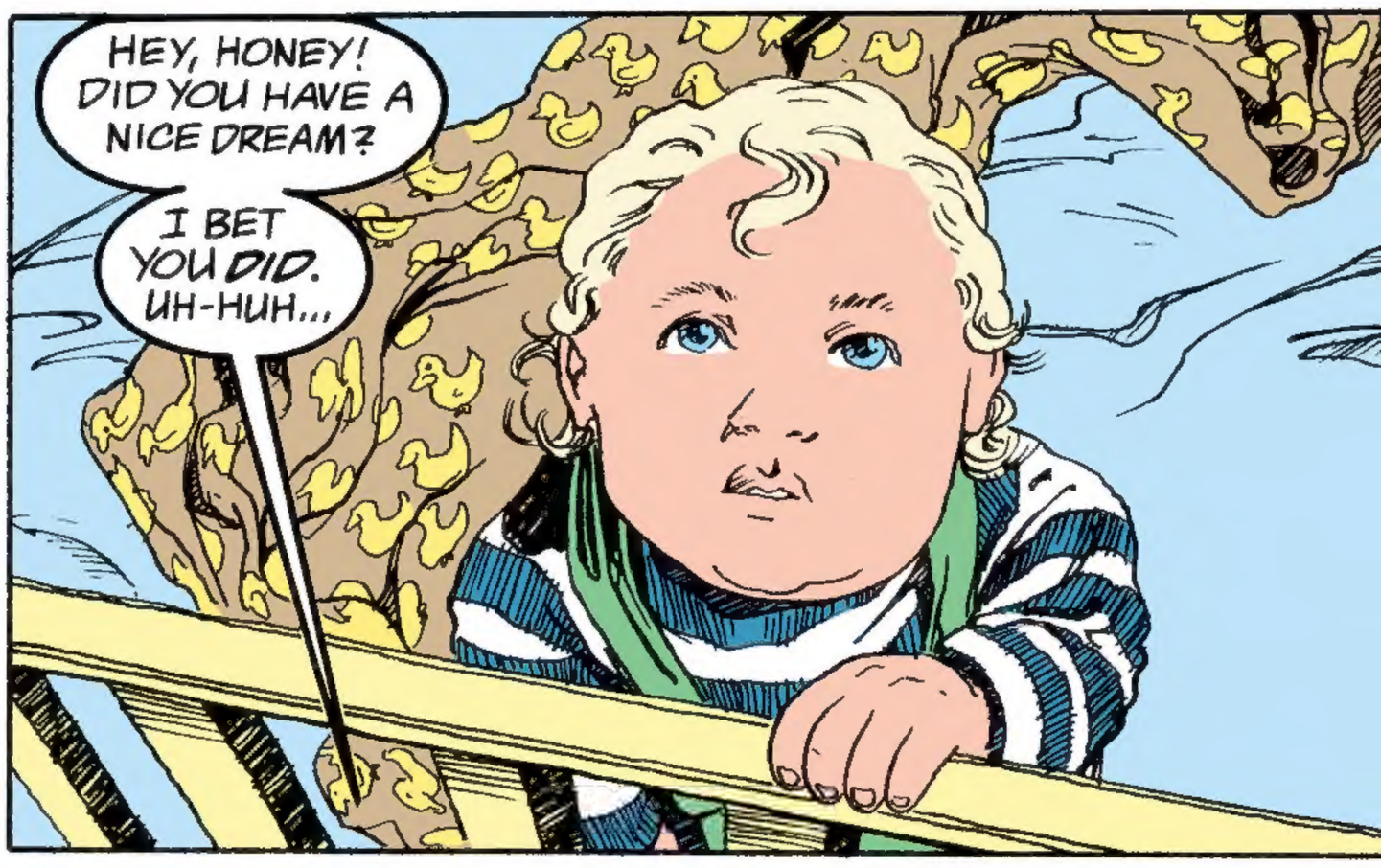
I'LL...

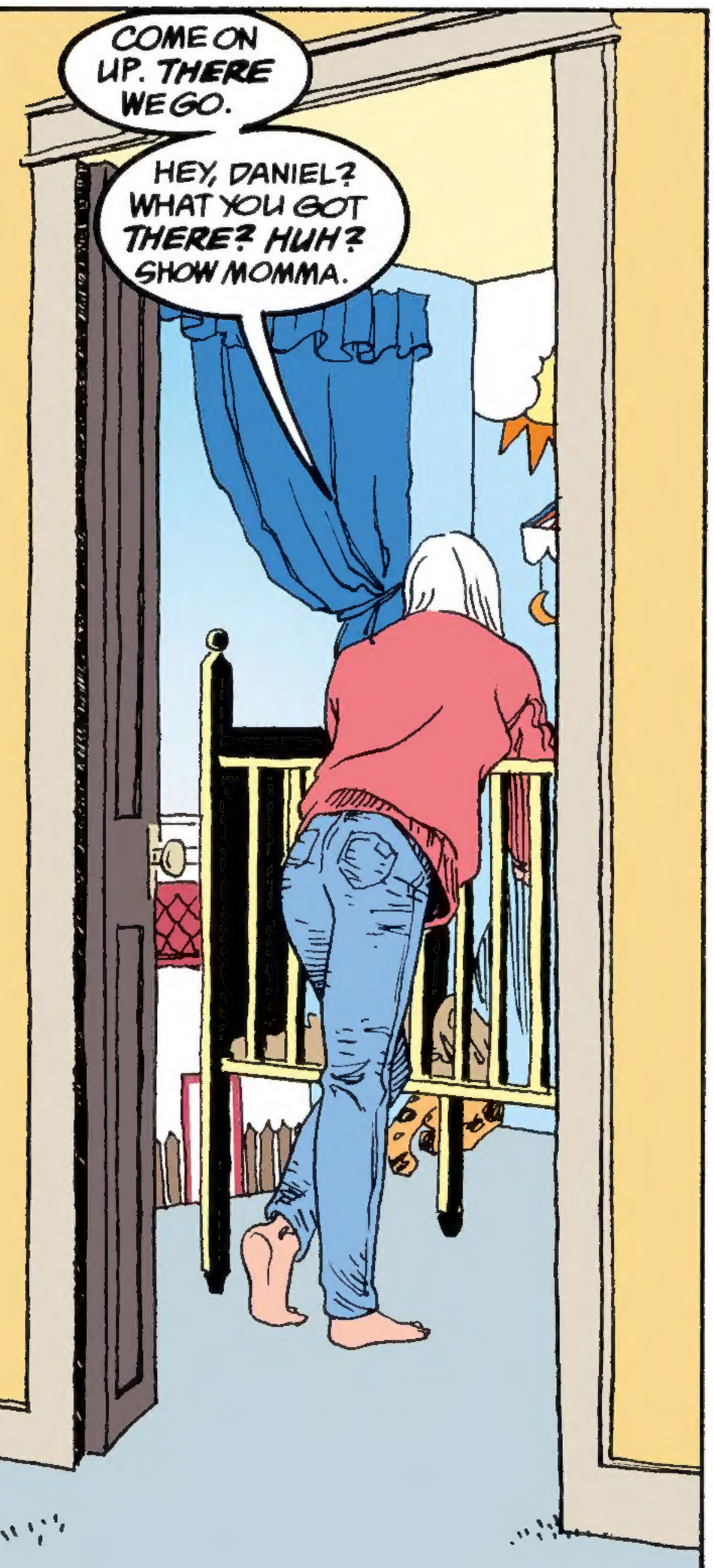
I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW, THEN. IT'S *YOUR* TURN TO MAKE DINNER.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

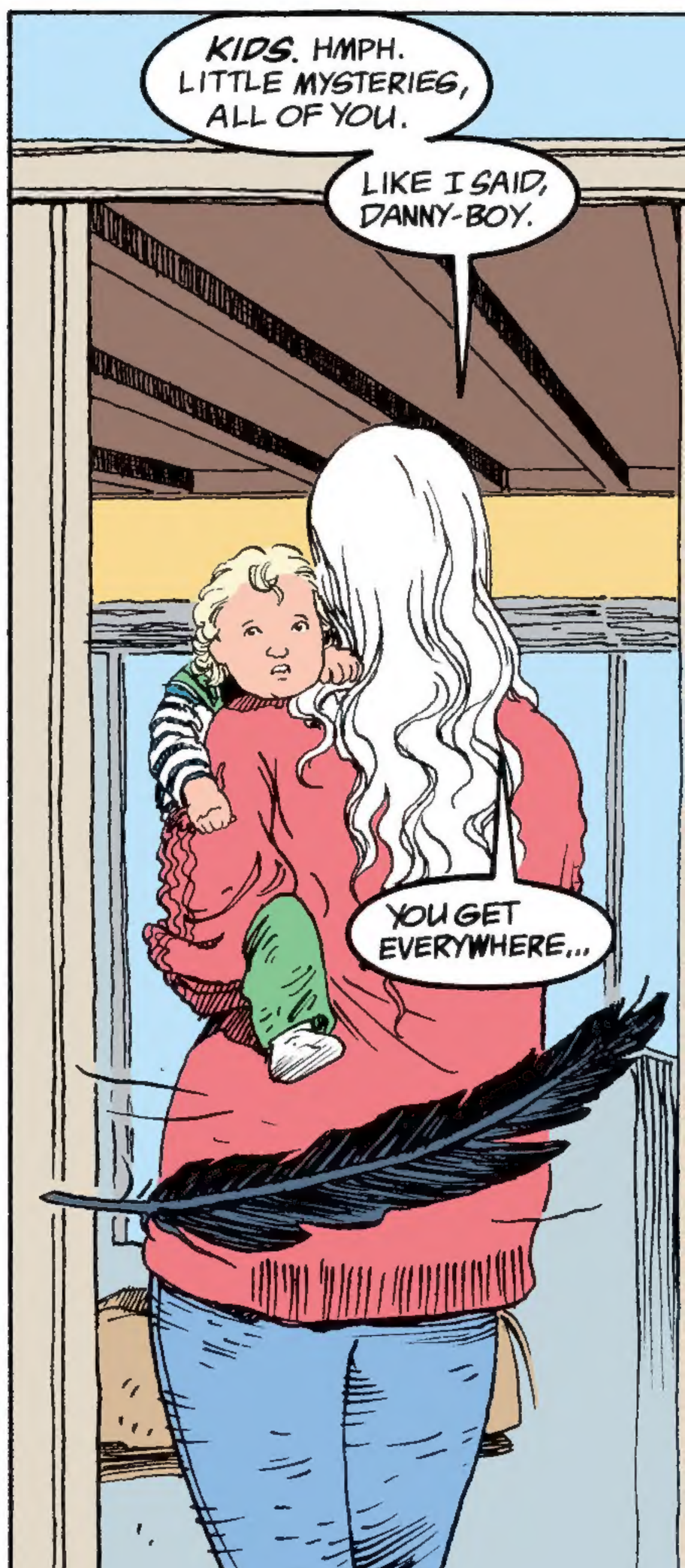
VOGUE
I'M IMPRESSED, THIS!


GOSSIP
OOPS. TIME FOR DANNY'S DIN-DINS.


HEY, HONEY! DID YOU HAVE A NICE DREAM?
I BET YOU DID. UH-HUH...


COME ON UP. THERE WE GO.
HEY, DANIEL? WHAT YOU GOT THERE? HUH? SHOW MOMMA.

A DIRTY OLD FEATHER?
TCH. WHERE ON EARTH DID YOU GET THIS FROM?


KIDS. HMPH. LITTLE MYSTERIES, ALL OF YOU.
LIKE I SAID, DANNY-BOY.
YOU GET EVERYWHERE...

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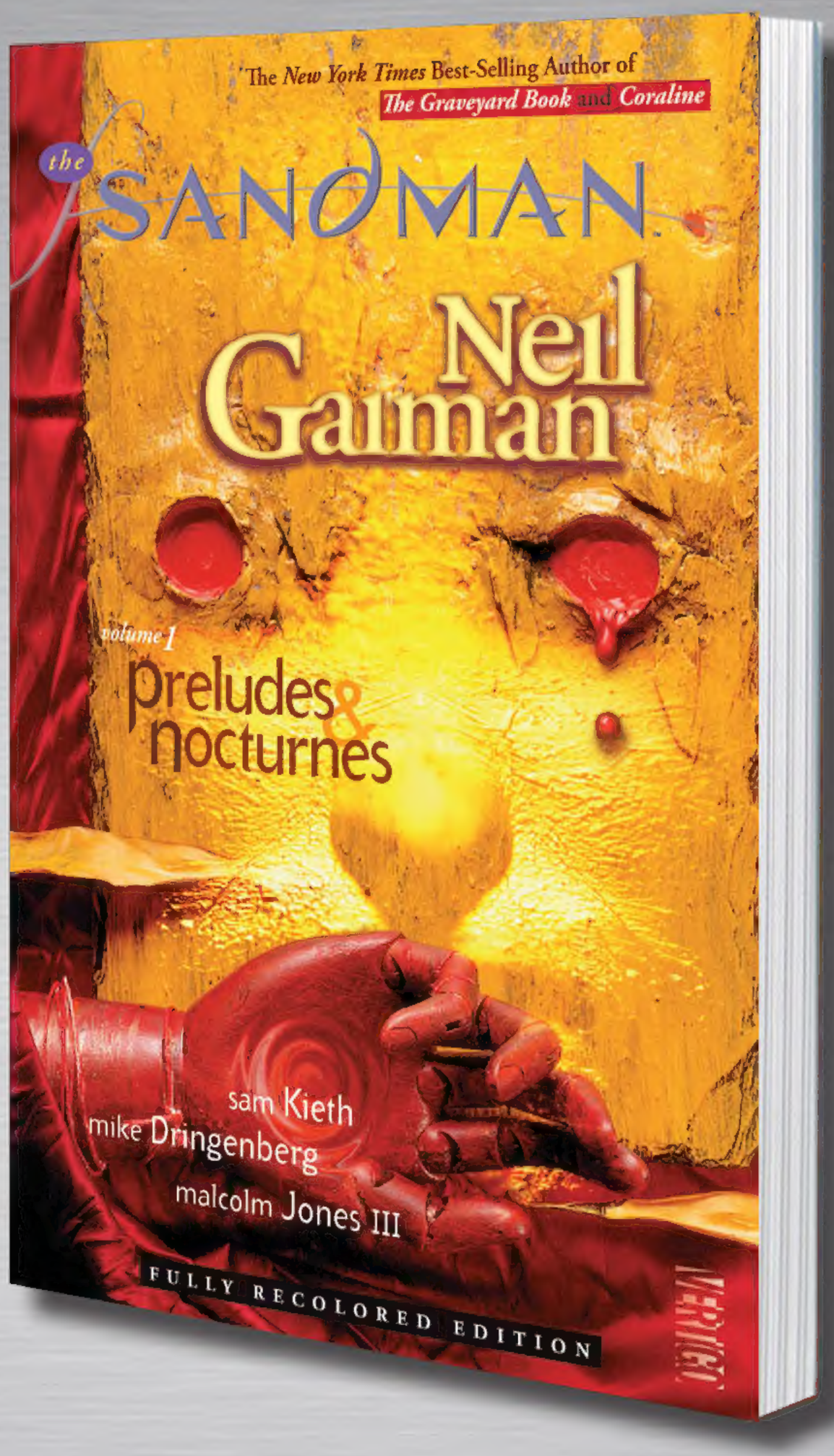
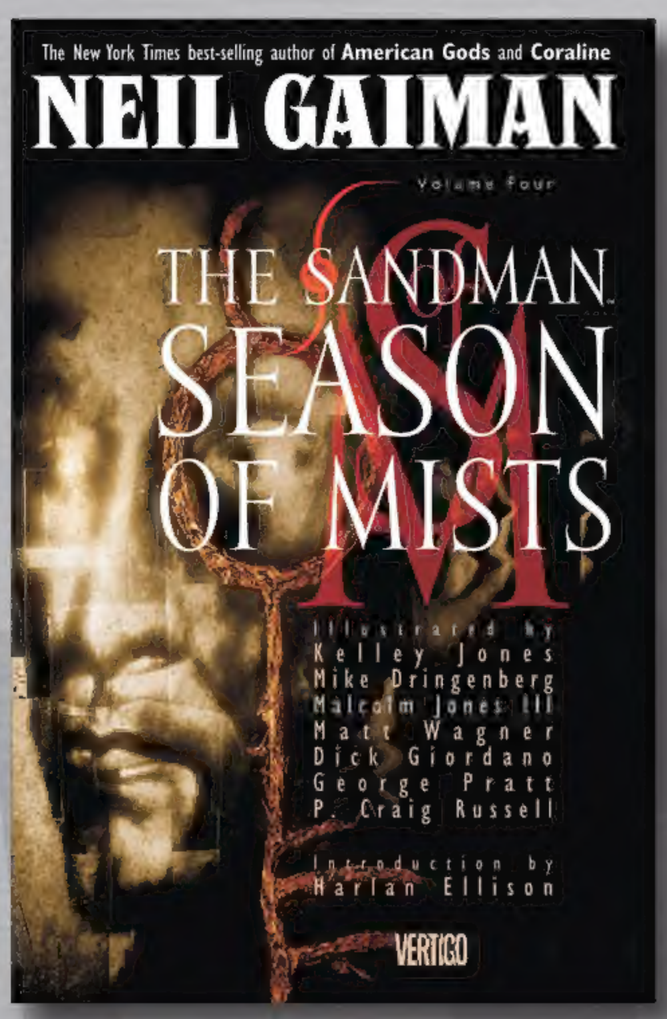
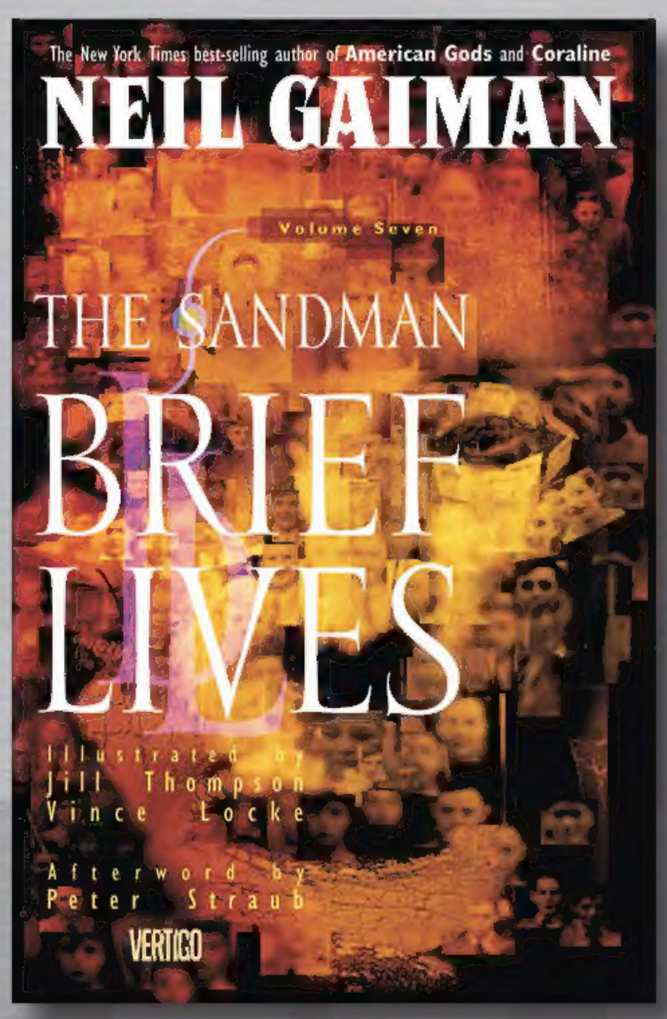


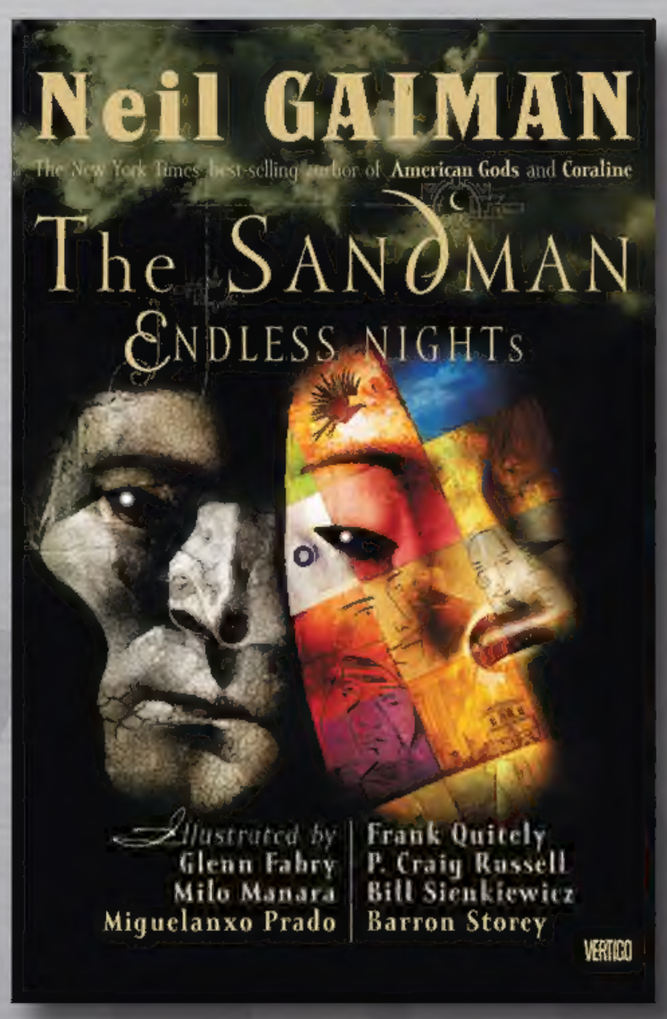
THE SANDMAN VOL. 4:
SEASON OF MISTS



THE SANDMAN VOL. 7:
BRIEF LIVES



THE SANDMAN:
ENDLESS NIGHTS



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